

A
SERMON

Preached at the

FUNERAL

MR. Tho. Whitchurch,

October the 15th

1691.

At Barking

AT

CHALFONT ST. PETER'S.

By HENRY PARSLET, A. M.
Rector of Hadgerley, in the County of Bucks.

L O N D O N,

Printed by W. and J. Wilde, for G. Croggs in
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Imprimatur,

Ex Aedibus Lambb.

Augusti II^{mo}.

1692.

Ra. Barker.

T O

Mr. Richard Whitchurch.

S I R,

I Here present you with a Discourse which was preached at the Desire of your Father, and is now published for the Satisfaction of some of your Relations, and as a lasting Testimony of that Esteem and Respects I have for your self. The Subject is of the greatest Concernment (how meanly soever it may be handled) and if well thought upon and considered, would have a mighty Influence upon us in the

The Epistle Dedicatory.

*due Conduct and Government of our
Lives: Which that it may have, is the
heartly Prayer of,*

S I R,

Your Obliged Friend,

and Humble Servant,

HENRY PARSLET.

A Ser-

A SERMON

Preached at the
FUNERAL
OF
Mr. THOMAS WHITCHURCH.

REV. XIV. 13.

And I heard a Voice from Heaven, saying unto me, write, Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their Labours, and their Works do follow them.

IT is the common and universal Judgment of Mankind, a Truth generally received, and which cannot be contradicted by any, that to be in such a State or Condition, as is not obnoxious to Pain and Trouble; and where true and real Happiness is

is to be found, is the true Interest and ought to be, nay, is the constant Aim and Desire of all men, as they are reasonable Creatures; for the Soul of Man can never be so far corrupted, as not to design in all its deliberate and advised Actions, its own Happiness and Felicity as its End; insomuch, that those who have made it their Business to understand Humane Nature, have thought it enough barely to intimate and need- less to prove this Point, because it is already by every one confess'd, no Notion more com- mon, or more generally owned, than this, viz. That every Man desires to be free from Pain, Grief and Trouble, from any thing that is uneasie and vexatious to him, and to live in an Estate of Delight and Happiness. There is another universal Judgment of all Mankind, not denied by any man that will give himself leave to consider and weigh the worth of things; and that is this, that the greater, and more durable Delight, is to be chosen before the shorter and the less; for Delight and Happiness being in the Opinion of all Men, esteemed a thing inoffensively good, of which there can be no noxious or harmful Excess, it followeth, that the more of this excellent Con- dition any man enjoyeth, it is so much the better for him, or he is so much the happier.

Now

Now if we look into all those outward things that 'tis possible for us to enjoy here in this World, we cannot find Happiness inscrib'd upon them, much less the greatest Happiness, Riches, Honours and Pleasures here, as they are unsatisfactory to the Soul of Man, when enjoyed; so they are uncertain, and easily interrupted, and oftentimes intermixt with Troubles, or Evils, of one sort or other; either by some Casualty or Accident they may be taken from us, or else we by Diseases and Sickneses made unfit to enjoy them; or at least, we are by Death utterly deprived of them. Now therefore, if we will be wise, we must chuse something for our Happiness that is more pleasurable and satisfactory, more lasting and durable, and that is a virtuous Life and Actions, a Life lead according to God's Will and Command, to Right Reason and true Religion; and this will even here, amidst the Troubles and Afflictions of this Life, delight our Souls with solid Joys, and go along with us into the World to come, to our unspeakable Comfort; for (saith the Text) *Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord, they rest from their Labours, and their Works do follow them.* From these Words, I shall endeavour to describe unto you, the Happiness of those that die in the Lord, after they

they are delivered from the Burden of the Flesh, and to prove that in Heaven God hath provided for virtuous men, an Estate of Happiness, that is in all respects the greatest that possibly can be imagined or enjoyed. And this you cannot but grant, if you consider those Parts and Properties of it, which in the Text are either explicitly or implicitly affirmed concerning it. As,

- I. The First Property thereof, is the Absence of Grief, and Security from it : *They rest from their Labours.*
- II. The Second, is the actual Possession of Joy and Happiness ; for *Blessed*, or happy *are they*, saith the Text ; which Blessedness, without doubt, shall be in the highest Degree, and greatest Measure, suitable to the Goodness of God, who gives it, and to the Capacities of those who are to receive it.
- III. Thirdly and Lastly, This Blessedness shall be of the greatest Duration ; and this is also implied in the Text, for otherwise there cannot be a Freedom from all Sorrow, if it were possible for their Happiness to be interrupted.

1. The first Property of this Happiness, is, that they have the Absence of Grief, and Secularity from it; *They rest from their Labours*: This is necessarily supposed to a State of Happiness, for that cannot be where Pains or Sorrows are mixt, or fill any part of the Soul, there being no Foundation for true and real Happiness, where the Place is already possess'd with Grief: For, as the School-men use to argue, that the Privation or Absence of Cold, is necessarily required for the introducing of Heat; so they affirm also, that the Absence of Grief or Sorrow is as necessary for the Production of Delight and Pleasure. Freedom from Evil is the Ground or *Basis* of Delight, and is in many places, of Scripture expressly asserted to be part of the Happiness of the Blessed in Heaven; especially by St. *John*, who we know, in the Gospel, was a Person so very dear to our Saviour, that he chose him out of all his Disciples, more particularly to shew unto him those things that were to come to pass at the end of the World. He saw the Heavens and the Earth fly away from before the Face of God, and there was no place found for them, *Rev. 20. 11.* He saw also a new Heaven, and a new Earth, and a new Jerusalem coming down from God, richly adorned, as a Bride in expectation of her Bridegroom. *Rev. 21. Ver. 1, 2, 3.* And I heard (saith he) a great Voide
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out of Heaven, saying, Behold the Tabernacle of God is with Men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his People, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God: And God shall wipe away all Tears from their Eyes, and there shall be no more Death, neither Sorrow, nor Crying, neither shall there be any more Pain. Behold, here you have a particular Revelation of the first part of the Happiness of good men in Heaven, which is a Security from Grief; and that so clearly and plainly delivered, that there can be no doubt of it. For this came not, like the Oracles of old, in a soft Murmur or Whisper; but he heard a great Voice, and that declaring the Mind of God, not in dark Speech, or Words capable of various Construction, but in plain down-right Terms, *There shall be no more Death, nor Sorrow, nor Crying, nor Pain.* The Words you see are general and full, and can be meant of nothing else than a perfect Freedom from all Evil. But to discourse a little more particularly of this Point, The Evils to which we are here subject, and which in Heaven we shall be delivered or freed from, are these two, (1.) From the Evil of Sin, and from all Temptations to it. (2.) From the Evil of Affliction, or Punishment for Sin.

(1.) From the Evil of Sin, and from all Temptation to it: We shall be there out of a possibility

bility of ever sinning any more; free even from all Temptation to it. Now Sin is the great Evil good Men complain of, and are afraid of, and notwithstanding all their Vigilance and Care, they may sometimes fall into Sin, or an Offence against God; I say sometimes, though very rarely, for if it be often and generally so, they cease to be good Men; but whenever it is, it creates Grief and Trouble to them. The Life of a Christian is a continual Warfare, the Enemies he is to encounter are insinuating and powerful: He is to fight against his own Lusts and Passions, and evil Concupiscences, to mortifie Pride, to subdue Anger, to banish the least Thoughts and Motions of Malice and Revenge out of his Mind: He is to arm himself against ill Examples, and to overcome the Suggestions of Satan, who is most busie, and most subtle in making all the other Temptations, we may meet withal, operative and effectual upon us, by his Seductions and Delusions, and but too often successful. So that whereas our Souls ought to be consecrated as a Holy Temple unto the Lord, free from all Pollution of Sin, from all sorts of Intemperance, Injustice and Uncharitableness, and full of Purity, Love and Charity, we do here obtain these but in an imperfect degree, and they are often interrupted; which makes the good Man cry out with the Apostle;

Who shall deliver me from this Body of Death? and the through his Faith, and Courage, and Constancy, he daily gets ground of his spiritual Enemies; yet it is but by little and little, and he is in perpetual Danger, still being surpriz'd into some little Compliances, at least contrary to the Will of God, and by degrees perhaps, without his extraordinary Watchfulness, and God's Grace, into greater. This is our Portion here, and our Lot is this; but when we arrive unto those Regions of Bliss and Glory that are above, have once weathered these short Storms, prov'd our selves good and loyal Subjects to God Almighty, in fighting against his and our Enemies (I mean our irregular Passions and Appetites) and overcoming them too, in great measure; if the general Bent and Inclination of our Souls have been to serve, and to please God, He will graciously forgive the little Follies and Imperfections of Humane Nature, and receive us into his Favour, never to be forfeited any more; where we shall neither sin, nor have any Temptation to sin; but be under an happy Impossibility of offending God. Thus shall we be freed from the Evil of Sin.

(2.) In Heaven we shall also be free from the Evil of Affliction, or Punishment for Sin: For I reckon all the Miseries of this Life, all the Imperfections of it, both of Mind and Body, viz. the Imper-

Imperfection of our Knowledge, the Diseases and Infirmities of our Bodies to be the Effects of Sin, and a Punishment of God for it. Whatsoever is painful and burthensome to Nature, is a Fruit of Sin, and Mark of our Rebellion against God.

Now, as in Heaven there is an absolute Freedom from all Sin, so there will be also from all Imperfection, Pain, and Misery, which are the proper Attendants and Consequents of Sin. There shall be no Blindness in the Mind, no Perverseness in the Will, no Error in the Judgment, no Disorder in the Affections, no Weariness in serving God. There we may hope to be so happy, as to know without Mistake, to judge without Partiality, and to be Wise without Folly : Love is there without Hatred, Jealousie or Envy ; Joy without any Sighing or Sorrow, Praises without Complaints, Obedience without Reluctance ; in one word, perfect Purity and Holiness without Spot or Blemish to sully the Glory of it. As this lower Region of the Air, we see is the Place of Clouds and Darkness, Thunder and Lightning, Storm and Tempest ; but to the Dwelling of the Sun and fixed Stars, none of these pitchy Vapours ascend to obscure their Brightness, or trouble their Peace ; just so is this World the Scene of Misery and Vexation, Confusion and Disorder ; our Bodies are tossed with several Storms,
and

and our Souls many times hurried with more violent Tempests, the fierce Guits of their own Passions; but when we ascend to Heaven, that Region of Light, we shall be out of the reach of these Troubles, and find our selves in a State of perfect Rest and Joy, without the least Disgust to abate our Contentment. Now this Freedom from the Sins and Follies, the Troubles and Inconveniencies, the Sickneses and Diseases, imperfections, that we are here liable to, must needs be very delightful.

*Suave mari magno, turbantibus æquora nautis,
E Terra alterius magnum spectare laborem.*

It is a pleasant thing (saith *Lucretius*) for one that has been in a troublesome and tempestuous Sea, and is himself arriv'd safe on the Land, to look back and behold the Troubles and Dangers those are expos'd to, who are yet tosd upon the Waves; not that it can be pleasant for one Man to see another in Distress, but a Joy to be in Security, and to view those dismal Dangers which he himself hath so narrowly escaped. So likewise it is pleasant to the Blessed in Heaven, after they are themselves in Safety and Security, to remember all the Inconveniencies, Hazards, and Afflictions which they were here expos'd to

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in this Life, and those eternal Torments they were obnoxious to, and which is the miserable Lot and Portion of others, and they themselves, by the Mercy and Goodness of God, have so nearly escaped. This very Consideration must needs afford them fit Matter of Praises and Thanksgivings to God, who hath placed them in a blessed Estate, not obnoxious to any of their former Griefs, Sickneses, or Pains; and hath also redeemed them from the dreadful Region of Darkness, and brought them to his own marvellous Light. This then is the first Property of the Happiness of those that die in the Lord, viz. the Absence of Grief, and Security from Evil: *They rest from their Labours.*

The Second Property of those that die in the Lord, is the actual Possession of Joy and Happiness; for *Blessed, or happy, are they* (saith the Text.) And this Happiness, it may be reasonably suppos'd, will principally consist,

1. In the Perfection of our Knowledge, our Understandings being enlarged and widen'd, shall have a right Knowledge, and clear Sight and Vision of God. We here *know but in part*, and see through a Glass darkly: *But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away*, 1 Cor. 13. v. 9, 10, 11. There the Joy of the Righteous shall be great from the Possession

session of God himself, by the clearest Knowledge, and purest love of his Excellencies. They see him as he is, 1 *John* 3. v. 2, 3. i. e. We shall not behold him, or know him as we do now, by Similitudes, Resemblances, and Expressions borrowed from other things (which is all our Natures are here capable to bear;) but by a clear Notion of him form'd in our Minds, whereby they will be fill'd with a Knowledge of him so clear, distinct and strong, that will even turn us into his own Nature, Life and Happiness. The holy Soul shall there see the King in his Beauty, all the Perfections of that infinitely glorious and blessed Being in their Brightness and Purity. And this Sight will cause the most ardent Love, by which there shall be an intimate, or vital Union between the Soul and its Happiness, and from thence will spring perfect Delight, *Psal.* 16. 11. *For in the Presence of God there is fulness of Joy, and at his Right Hand there are Pleasures for evermore.* And it cannot be otherwise, for how pleasant must it needs be, to be delivered from the Imperfections, Errors and Mistakes concerning Persons or Things here; nay, of God himself: As to Persons, we sometimes judge falsely here, and most often; sometimes too severely, at other times too favourably; too severely, either through mistake, not knowing from what Prin-

Principles the Actions of Men proceed, or from want of Charity to derive them from the best ; too favourably, out of Partiality or Ignorance: for some Men may seem a great deal better than they are, and others a great deal worse. Now these Mistakes on both sides will be there taken away, and every one shall appear as he is really in himself, and be judged accordingly. So that though a Man should have here the Applause of the whole World, yet if he be inwardly bad and vicious, he shall be miserable, and though he be condemn'd and hated of all, yet if he be sincerely good and vertuous, he shall be happy. And then, as to our Judgment of God, in the Dispensations of his Providence, we are sometimes at a Loss, how they can consist with a God of infinite Goodness and Justice ; but there the Intricacies of God's Providence shall be unfolded, the Wisdom, and Justice, and Goodness of God in his darkest Dispensations, and most unsearchable Actions, shall be cleared up. There our Understandings shall be extraordinarily and supernaturally illuminated, and our Knowledge be wonderfully encreas'd and advanc'd, and our Minds exceedingly pleased and delighted, both by the Repetition and new Variety of Contemplation. There we shall be freed from all those Mists and Vapours that here becloud our Reason, and hin-

der us from the best Exercise thereof, the Love of God, and Contemplation of his Perfections, which must needs be very delightful: for if the Light of the Sun be so pleasant, that every Morning revives the World, and renders it new to us, which was buried in the Darknes of the Night; how infinitely pleasant will the Light of Glory be, that discovers the absolute and universal Excellencies of the Deity; such as are his pure and unspotted Holiness, his immense Wisdom and Understanding, his Almighty Power, and his infinite Mercy? Oh! how inexpressibly great is the Happiness that proceeds from the Illumination of a purify'd Soul, when such is the Amiability of God, that his infinite and eternal Felicity ariseth from the Fruition of himself, as ours does from the Enjoyment of him; so that our Happiness will be of the same Nature, though not in the same Degree with God's himself. For we shall (as our Saviour hath promised in the fore-cited Place) see God as he is, *i. e.* we shall have as real an Enjoyment of him, and as sensibly perceive it, as we do now any Good in this World, though the manner of it is not certainly known. Let us therefore conceive with our selves, as well as we can, what his infinite Perfections are, his Wisdom, his Goodness, his Power, his Unchangeableness, his Immortality and
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Bliss, and then make account there will be a lively Communication between us and all these, which will make us Partakers of his Happiness : We shall not only enjoy such good things as flow from his greatest Favour and Love ; but in our Measures, and according to such Capacities as he will give us, be what he himself is, bear some similitude to him in Wisdom, Goodness, and Happiness ; we shall be filled with Divine Joys and Pleasures, by being filled with a great sense of him, and strong Love to him, and a lively Resemblance of his blessed Nature, immutably and immortally, without any Change, and without any End. There, if we live and die good Men, we shall enjoy all the Effects of an holy Friendship (if I may so speak) with infinite goodness, and receive such Communications from his boundless Love, as shall make us really and substantially happy, like as he himself is. This then is one part of the Happiness of the Blessed (and a great one too) *viz.* it consists in the Perfection of their Knowledge.

2. Another Part of the Happiness of Heaven consists in the Union of Affection among the blessed Inhabitants thereof ; a want of which, causeth a great part of the Troubles of this Life : Those who serve God faithfully here, shall then go to the Company of the Prophets and Apostles,

and all the holy Men of God, that have been in all the Ages of the World, to those pure and immaculate Beings, full of Love, to their Maker; and of Kindness and Charity one towards another, no Animosities or Divisions shall be there, nothing that interrupts their Peace: Peevishness and Passion, Mis-judgings, Mis-constructions, hard Censures of each others Actions, too much Self-Love, Difference in Judgment, Pride and Emulation imbitters mens Converse here; but there Corruption on all sides shall be removed, their Judgments and Affections united, and their Dispositions exactly suited; they shall be free from all manner of Injury, Envy, Suspition, or Uncharitableness. The Prince of Peace reigns in the Heavenly *Jerusalem*, and preserves an everlasting Serenity and Calmness; the mutinous Spirits that rebell'd, were presently chas'd from thence into this lower Region, where they brought Trouble and Disorder: there is not, there cannot be the least Jar or Discord between those happy Inhabitants, an inviolable Love unites them all, they enjoy without Envy; for infinite Blessedness is not diminished by the Number of Possessors; the Inheritance in Light is common to all. Although the Angels are distinguished by their several Orders and Ministrations, yet a Chain of holy Love and Charity binds all their Affections together;

together ; and though the Saints shine with different Degrees of Glory, yet, as in a *Chorus* of Musick, the different Voices make one entire Harmony ; so there they are all united by the most ardent Love and Affection : There where there are no cross Interests to contend with, no Malice or Envy, no Mistake or Prejudice, no Storms or Tempests of unruly Passions, or inordinate Desires to ruffle or discompose their Happiness to all Eternity. There the Righteous shall enter into those blessed and peaceful Habitations, where none of those Jars and Contentions, with which this World is exercis'd, disturb their Rest ; no Disputes or Controversies, no Ill-will or want of Charity marr that everlasting Quiet which they always enjoy, when they adore the God of Peace, and follow the Lamb, the Prince of Peace. The Contests and Divisions amongst us, must needs make all the Sons of Peace grow weary, and wish with the Psalmist, that they had Wings like a Dove, that they might fly away, and be at rest, and hasten their Escape from the stormy Wind and Tempest, and make them long for those cool and silent Shades of the Grave, and for that Peace that is in the Region beyond it, that Peace which shall never be interrupted ; which brings me to the

III. Property of the Happiness of the Blessed,
viz. That it shall be of the longest Duration, and
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that is Eternal and Everlasting ; without which, it could not indeed be the greatest Happiness : for such a Life cannot be the most happy, which is not secure of its own Eternity. If therefore any thing be design'd for the full Satisfaction of Humane Nature, it must be a Delight that shall last for ever, and that is such, that it must needs be satisfactory, seeing no man can wish for more than eternal Happiness. The most full Enjoyment of all the good Things this World affords, is not to be called or accounted Happiness, not only because they are vain and empty of true Satisfaction, but also because not permanent and lasting ; they are soon gone, soon decay'd, and quickly parted withal ; *Riches are not for ever, neither doth a Crown endure to all Generations*, Prov. 27. 24. but Heaven is an Inheritance as safe as great. Here we are subject to Time, that carries us and all our Goods down its swift Stream ; but there Eternity, that is fixt and unchangeable, embraces us in its Bosome. As God's liberal Hand bestows, so his Powerful preserves our Happiness ; the Blessed shall sing everlasting Hymns of Glory, and Songs of Thanksgiving to the great Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier, who hath prepared and purchased that Felicity for them, and hath brought them to the secure Possession of it. But when we have said all we can of the Happiness

ness of Heaven, we must acknowledge that we fall infinitely short of what it is in it self. It is compared in Scripture to a Crown, a Kingdom, a Feast ; but is indeed much more than all this : It is a Kingdom without Cares, a Crown without a Cross, a Feast without Satiety. It is called by these Names, because these are the greatest things this lower World hath. These Words amongst us sound high, and speak Power, and Honour, and Plenty, and Pleasures, and what the World calls good, and therefore Heaven is represented by such things which we understand and regard. God Almighty saw our Infirmary, that we cannot well Judge of Delights that are purely Intellectual and Spiritual, and hath so far condescended to us, as to draw us some Scenes of Heavenly Joys in the Shapes and Figures of our fullest earthly Pleasures ; such are those of Feasting, the Possession of Riches, Honours and the like ; but then these are but low and short Representations of the things themselves ; such Images of Heaven, as the Tabernacle and Temple among the Jews were, of this and the other World. They were Images in little, but came greatly short of what they represented : So are these things of Heaven ; for without any such frail deceitful things, there shall be abundance of Peace, and Fulness of Joy, an exceeding and eternal weight of

of Glory. Finally, In the present State, we are not capable to receive the full Knowledge of Heaven; what we understand, is infinitely desirable; but the most glorious part is still undiscovered. The Apostle tells us, in the First Epistle to the *Corinthians*, Chap. 2. Ver. 9. *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it entred into the Heart of Man, to conceive what God hath prepared for those that love him.* We have reason to break forth in the Language of the Psalmist, and say, *How great is thy Goodness, O Lord! which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee.* We have nothing else to do but to supply the Defects of our Understanding with an holy Admiration, and make good use of what is discovered to us. As,

1. From what has been said, we may learn this great Truth, that Heaven alone is the Place of Happiness, and that 'tis only the good and obedient Christian, that shall be happy in Death, only such whose good Works do follow them; not that the best Works of the best Men can merit any such Condition; but that these Works, which also are performed by the Grace and Assistance of God, do qualifie them for that Happiness which is purchased for them by the Merits of Jesus Christ. If ever therefore we expect to arrive at Heaven and Happiness as our

End,

End, we must endeavour after Holiness and Righteousness, as the Means through Jesus Christ our Lord ; and let nothing divert us from it, neither the Hopes or Fears, nor the Smiles or Frowns of this World. If this Principle be but firmly fixed in us through God's Grace, the greatest Difficulties, nor the hardest Labours will scarcely discourage our Resolution, or hinder our Endeavours to obtain it : If it be difficult for Mankind to reduce their natural Inclinations to a Compliance with Christ's Precepts, to deny the inordinate Appetite of sensual Pleasure, to deny unlawful Gains and Interests to the Desire of Wealth and Riches, to mortifie Pride, to subdue Malice, Anger, Revenge, and other sinful Passions ; to retain Piety towards God in a profane and wicked Age ; Truth and Justice towards Men in a deceitful and injurious VWorld : If it be difficult thus to do, yet he that hath firmly fix'd this Principle in his Mind, that this is the Way to Heaven, and Heaven alone the Place of Happiness, will attempt to make his way thither, through these or any other Difficulties, in the View of the Glory set before him. For,

2. A Prospect of this Happiness should reconcile our Minds to any Condition, to any Circumstances of Life, which the Divine Providence

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may think fit to bring us to. We are to remember, that God sent us into the VVorld for Religion, we are but to pass through our pleasant Fields, or our hard Labours; but to lodge a little while in our fine Fields, or our meaner Cottages; but to bait in the way at our full Tables, or with our spare Diet. Let us not therefore have any great Esteem for the things of this VVorld; there is no other reason why they should be loved or valued by us; but as they conduce to our chief End, which is God and his Glory, and our Happiness and Felicity. VVe should here imitate the Traveller, who, when fix'd in his Determination of arriving at some certain Place, if he meet with two or three several VVays, desires not *this* more than *that*, but only as *this* may more readily bring him to his Rest: He cares not much whether the VVay be plain or hilly, whether it lead to the Right-Hand, or the Left, all is indifferent, so it brings him whither he would go. After the like manner we are to behave our selves in the Use of the things of this World; we are not much to love the good things thereof, nor fear the Evils of it; but free from both, make only choice of that which leads to our Salvation, and fits us for that Country we are seeking; If Poverty or Meanness brings us to God, we are to embrace

embrace it with both Arms, and esteem it ; if Riches or Honours would withdraw us from him, we must trample them under foot, and cast them from us ; if Sufferings and Afflictions, Disgraces and Neglect, the unjust Reproaches and Calumnies of men, assist us to gain Heaven, we are to rejoyce thereat, and to receive them with all Submission and Willingness. We are neither to desire or abhor the good or evil in this Life, but as it unites or separates us from God, as it brings us nearer to, or drives us farther from our supream Happiness ; always remembring that compleat Happiness is only there to be expected, where our Journey ends. And who would not contentedly go through a Prison to a Palace, a barren Wilderness, to a Land of Promise ? Who would be uneasie under all that Load of Afflictions that may befall him here, by the Malice and Contrivance of evil men ? Nay, who would not endure the Cross, and despise the Shame, for the Joy that is set before him ? Did we always thus act, how unmov'd would the Rumours of Wars, and Devastations leave us, which invade and agitate mens Breasts, and disturb their most pleasant and compos'd Hours ? We should let him alone to rule the World that made it ; to take care of us, who hath engag'd it ; whose

Providence watcheth over us, and whose Eternal Happiness awaits us. Were we but once arriv'd at a true Indifferency of Mind, Acquiescence in, and ready Compliance with the Infinite Wisdom, Power and Goodness of God, and feared *Doing* instead of *Suffering* Evil; how serene! how full of Tranquility should we be amidst the Changes, Tumults, and Commotions of this stormy Region, this uncertain State, and how absolutely resign'd to the Will of God in all things?

3. From what hath been said concerning the Nature of the Happiness of Heaven: This should teach us to endeavour after that Frame and Temper of Mind here, those good Dispositions of Soul, as may fit us for the Enjoyment of it. For instance, Does the Happiness of Heaven consist in the Perfection of your Knowledge? Beg of God, that he would open your Eyes here, enlighten your Understandings, and translate you from Darkness to Light. Believe and consider, that wilful and gross Ignorance here, is but a bad Preparation for Perfection of Knowledge hereafter, and that those are not likely to come to Heaven, that will not be at the Pains to understand the very first Principles of their Religion. And this, as it will put you upon endeavouring after Knowledge, so it will
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stir you up to practice and live up to the Knowledge of those things, which God hath been pleased most clearly and plainly to reveal in his VVord ; for without Practice, all the Knowledge in the VVorld signifies nothing, and the ready way to encrease in Knowledge, is to practice what we already know ; to him that hath shall be given, is as true of Knowledge as of Grace. Further, Does the Happiness of Heaven consist in a clear Knowledge and Sight of God, and in an Imitation of his Perfections ? Then endeavour to turn away your Eyes from beholding Vanities : Make it your Business to follow after Holiness, without which, no man shall see the Lord. Labour to see God here, that so you may be the fitter to see and enjoy him hereafter ; to see him in his Works, to search after, behold and admire that infinite Power, wisdom and Goodness, which are visible and legible in the VVorks of Creation and Providence ; but more especially, study to see and know God as he hath reveal'd himself in his VVord, to see his Holiness in his Precepts, his Justice in his Threatnings, his Grace and Goodness in his Promises ; that so by a Sight of the Righteousness and Equity of his Commands, you may be brought to an Observation of, and an hearty Compliance with the Divine Will here, and be in a good Capacity
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for ever to adore, admire and imitate the Divine Perfections hereafter. Finally, Does the Happiness of Heaven consist in a Union of Affections amongst the blessed Inhabitants thereof? Let us then endeavour to remove far from us, all Anger, Malice and Revenge, all those hateful Qualities that will render us fit only for the Converse of wicked and apostate Spirits, and endeavour after such calm and quiet, such charitable and peaceable Tempers, as may make us with infinite Delight, when we go away from this wrangling and contentious World, consort our selves with the blessed Inhabitants of the other.

I should now conclude, had not Custom made it almost necessary to say something upon these Occasions, which I shall do very briefly of our deceased Friend and Neighbour. He seem'd to take his Sickness very patiently, and manifested a perfect Resignation of himself to the Will of God: He was very sensible of his approaching End, and earnestly desired to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which he did with great Devotion. He express'd himself very charitably of all, and said, He ow'd no Man the least Ill-will; but was in perfect Charity with all the World, forgiving all those that any ways offended him, and if he had
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given Offence to any, desiring the like from them; relying upon the Merits of Christ for the Pardon of his Sins, and the Salvation of his Soul. I might perhaps say a great deal more; but I love not to speak much on these Occasions, and what I have here to add, is only this, That He was a kind Husband to his Wife, an indulgent Father to his Children, and a good Neighbour to his Friends and Acquaintance. But to conclude, That which now only remains to be done, is from this Instance of Mortality here before us (whose Soul we hope is at rest with God) earnestly to exhort you to think on your own Mortality, and to prepare for Immortality: In this short Life, to prepare for an endless one, that it may be happy. This Life is in it self not worth any thing; but the right use of it is of infinite Importance. It is like the very first step in a right or wrong Way, tending to a Palace or a Prison, which indeed is a small thing in it self; but its Efficiency and Tendency is of as much Concern as the whole Way and End it self. Which Preparation, is in short, by a Forsaking all former Sin and Wickedness, which God will pardon for Christ's Sake, and an Embracing of Vertue and Goodness.

This is that only which will be accepted of God, and not bare Repentance, without Amendment,

ment, unless it be where God sees good Fruits would follow. We are to endeavour to forsake all Sin, and sincerely to practise our most excellent Religion; live Soberly, Righteously, and Godly, which will bring here with it Gods Blessing, with the Peace and Satisfaction of a good Conscience, and qualifie us for that Happiness which Christ hath purchased for us, and will give to all such as are meet to be Partakers of it.

F I N I S.

Some Books Printed for George Conyers, in Little-Britain.

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